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ORLEANS COUNTY NUTRITION PROGRAM

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PASTOR
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Our Pre-White House mini conference event '50 and Beyond-Shaping your future,' was held on June 14, 2005 in Batavia, NY. It was spurred by a partnership of several agencies including The Genesee County Community College, Genesee and Orleans Offices for Aging and the First Presbyterian Church Nutrition for Elderly.

The round table format recruited 135 participants for the event. Several caucuses comprising leaders from area businesses, health care providers, community organizations, government and educational leaders from eight surrounding counties facilitated and participated in the format connecting aging concerns from baby boomers as well as senior citizens.

We look forward to our input being used as a resource tool for the upcoming White House Conference in Washington D.C. in December.

Sincerely,

Angela Blackley
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Conference Committee Members
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LIFELONG LEARNING

Priority Issue:

An elder population explosion is now upon us as 77 million baby boomers born between 1946 and 1964 reach retirement age. These older adults wish to continue life long learning as a means to effect social change and as a way of staying healthy. Many of these adults will not be financially equipped to retire or to take advantage of traditional educational opportunities. These adults must not be allowed to become isolated, but rather we need to take action to engage them in our communities, particularly in inter-generational activities.

Barriers:

- Stereotypes of what life long learning is and isn't and that formal learning/education is the only way to learn.
- Stereotypes about capabilities of older citizens.
- Individuals' lack of financial resources needed to reach out to target population.
- Programs' lack of financial resources needed to reach out to target population.
- Resistance to shared use of resources between agencies.

Proposed Solution(s):

- Increase funding for the Title V as a means of reaffirming and expanding employment and retraining for the increasing population of adults who are not financially equipped to retire and wish to remain a vital contributor to their community.
- Re-authorize the National and Community Service Trust Act as a means of reaffirming, expanding, revamping and recruiting more older adults and Baby Boomers into three largest senior volunteer programs in the nation: the Foster Grandparent Program, the Senior Companion Program and the RSVP Program.
- Encourage educational institutions to broaden scope to address older student interests and provide free or reduced fee schedule for low-income older adults.
- Facilitate collaboration at the national, state and local levels of organizations involving older adult volunteers and paid works, such as Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) and AARP, especially in regard to intergenerational involvement.
- Challenges AAAs and Corporation for National and Community Service Programs with experience in Working with older adults to do more intergenerational programming.
- Encourage training of older adult workers and volunteers to enhance their effectiveness.

HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

Priority Issue:

Mandate professional and continuing education of health professionals and paraprofessional in senior health and illness.

Barriers:

- AMA & Pharmaceutical companies spend a great deal of money on advertising.
- Polypharmacy is excessive.
- Handwriting of professionals is difficult to read and making multiple script mistakes.
- Loss of interaction with pharmacists due to mail order maintenance prescription.

Proposed Solution(s):

- Put additional monies into health prevention; staying health; continuing health education; better education of health issues.
- Require continuing education to be mandatory for doctors, pharmacists and other professionals & paraprofessionals.

LONG TERM CARE

Priority Issue I:

LTC services need to work towards a continuum of care, for all individuals, through a single point of entry that will provide on going assessments, education, evaluation and assistance to ensure services meet client needs.

Barriers:

Small issues (or problems) can become big issues without basic community supports. There are not enough community supports due to agency 'turf issues'. Seniors tend to be hesitant and sometimes non-trusting of public agencies (afraid they may be sent to a 'home').

Proposed Solution(s):

Development of organized community network of 'people-senior-support system' that is less intimidating and more 'user-friendly' for seniors. This network can focus on 'short term services' (ex: handiwork) as well as long-term in home services. Development of more Senior Centers for socialization, Senior Day Care and health focus (exercise, etc). Strengths of seniors must be focused on more than problems, etc.

Priority Issue II:

Medicaid needs to be preserved as the entitlement program of last resort supported by federal funding. Medicaid must be maintained to provide comprehensive Long Term Care services to elderly and disabled that have no other means to pay.

Barriers:

Medicaid has evolved into middle class 'impoverishment system'. LTC Insurance is too expensive for middle-aged people to pay-due to expense of raising their families. Medicaid may not be available if current level remains on going.

Proposed Solution(s):

Look for alternative ways to fund Long Term Care. Offer tax incentives for purchasing LTC Insurance. Offer more home-care services to avoid or prolong need for LTC in Nursing Facilities. Change Medicaid to strictly federally funded and split into 2 programs -----> 1) LTC - 2) Impoverished.

CARE GIVER ISSUES

Priority:

Financial relief is greatly needed for family care givers.

Barriers:

Dissemination of information; lack of affordable and appropriate home care.

Proposed Solution(s):

- To offer tax incentives to those providing care for a loved one in the community.
- To increase non medicaid home care monies; this is to help or increase early support in the home without destituteing care recipients or family.
- To provide a variety of community supports in all areas of the country such as adult day care both social and medical.
- Provide financial assistance for companion level care.
- Provide more national assistance with dissemination of information for care givers (whether local or long distance); assist local entities more in outreach campaigns.

ALTERNATIVE HEALTH CARE

Priority Issue:

- Standardization for alternative health care providers and medications to promote credibility of Alternative Health Care System.
- Expansion of incentives to cover cost of alternative health care methods.

Barriers:

- Lack of insurance coverage for botanical.
- Poor public education and public knowledge of alternative health care systems.

Proposed Solution(s):

- More valid and credible information made available to the public on health care options.
- "Cafeteria" coverage for Alternative health care options in insurance policies.

NUTRITION

Priority Issue I:

Increase awareness of the importance of nutrition education throughout the lifespan and its relation to successful aging and to prevent malnutrition.

Barriers:

- **Dementia-education on nutrition language barrier, lack of transportation, physically unable to prepare meals.**
- **Media-fast food commercials, over coming past habits, grocery store lay-out, conflicting advertising good vs. bad and labeling on food products confusing.**

Proposed Solution(s):

- **RD's more readily available for nutrition programs and education**
- **Additional information on nutrition-materials and science (prevention education)**
- **More grants/money to facilitate nutrition**
- **Promotion of local farmers markets**
- **Corrective labeling of food products**

Priority Issue II:

Support the value of the Older Americans Act Nutrition Programs and how they are promoting maximum independence and non-institutional care.

Barriers:

- **Money- cost of food**
- **Competing interests**
- **Lack of information/documentation-incomplete**
- **Language problems-understanding (confidential) data**
- **Understanding funding sources**
- **No consistent set of standards for meal programs**

Proposed Solution(s):

- **Better data**
- **Better education/money**
- **Collaboration with universities to compile data**
- **Universal recipes fo senior meals**

TRANSPORTATION

Priority Issue:

- **Not enough affordable and appropriate transportation available for seniors, especially in rural areas.**
- **Seniors are resistant to bus transport-fearful of routes, schedules, fares as well as uncomfortable in buses.**

Barriers:

- Restrictions placed on agencies by funders restrict cooperative efforts to share resources vehicles, etc.
- Public transit often involves long rides, confusing schedules, etc. "Pick up points" often not easily accessible.

Proposed Solution(s):

- A dedicated stream of funding for senior transportation, as well as loosening of restrictions placed by funders.
- Seniors need education re: public transportation to alleviate fear and confusion-maybe a "free ride" day w/staff to offer assistance.

HOUSING

Priority Issue I :

Lack of handicap accessible affordable housing for middle income seniors.

Barriers:

- Tax incentives have a lost that would have to be weighed in enacting these recommendations.
- Currently there is no one entity to whom training local builders would fall to. This responsibility would need to be designed to a specific entity, with an appropriate funding source.

Proposed Solution(s):

- Tax incentives for private dwellers modest handicap accessible single family, duplex, condo and/or apartments suitable for middle income seniors.
- Provide training for local builders of private homes on specifications for handicap accessible housing.
- Tax break to seniors for modifying own home for handicap accessibility.